



Somalia Human Development Report 2012

Empowering Youth for Peace and Development

Somalia is at a crossroads where decades of one of the world's most complex and protracted conflicts have shaped a country of stark contrasts. The south central region has experienced years of fighting and lawlessness, while the north-east and north-west have achieved a fragile semblance of peace and stability. The divide shows both what is possible in Somalia, and how much must be done so that all Somalis can walk on the path of development and peace. A powerful new vision for Somalia is required, one oriented around building an inclusive society, where all people feel empowered, and have the capabilities and opportunities to improve their lives.

Towards this end, new dynamism and hope could come from recognizing and harnessing the full potential of Somalia's youth. Young people have been one of the worst-afflicted groups to suffer inter-generational historical exclusion. At the same time, in recent years, they have become the largest population cohort. This presents both tremendous possibilities and dire threats. Opportunities could come through providing quality education and decent jobs, for example, by channeling the 'demographic dividend' into economic gains and social transformation. Threats emerge when educational institutions and labour markets fail to respond to the needs of youth, and some end up pursuing violent alternatives.

Given Somalia's now long history of development and peacebuilding strategies that have had limited success, it is clear that the way forward depends on a much more ambitious agenda that aims for transformation. An essential aspect is placing positive youth empowerment at the centre of all peacebuilding and development goals, and advancing it through shifts in policies, priorities and institutional reforms. This calls for actions at both the central and local levels. Given the large numbers of marginalized youth and other citizens, a solid foundation of democracy must be built, including through mechanisms institutionalizing transparency and accountability to check corruption, eliminate discrimination and ensure that people's voices are heard and responded to at all levels. Community-led poverty reduction and peacebuilding strategies at the same time need to reduce disparities in social, economic and political empowerment that breed resentment and heighten the potential for conflict.

The international community has made several efforts to join hands with Somali stakeholders in bringing peace and stability to Somalia. Fifteen well-intentioned peace and reconciliation efforts have faltered, however. Along the way, Somaliland seceded from Somalia and declared independence in 1991, while Puntland became an autonomous state within the Somalia federal structure in 1998. These two regions have established some stability through bottom-up conflict transformation with a sustained focus on resolving issues at the community level.

But conflict has continued to be intractable in south central Somalia. One explanation for the failure of reconciliation there is that peace processes have been preoccupied with the top-down task of state-building and power-sharing. This approach has not yet succeeded because it has not been sufficiently broad-based, engaging the population at large. Fundamental questions about the form of the Somali government and how to equitably manage the distribution of political power and resources have remained unaddressed, as have the root causes of conflict. These encompass historical and political factors such as governance failure and the legacy of past violence; underdevelopment, economic stagnation and chronic poverty; inequalities across different social groups and levels; the demographic youth bulge; and growing environmental stresses.

State-building is important, but it cannot take hold in an environment of distrust and wide-spread exclusion, and without dealing with the drivers of conflict. An analysis of Somalia suggests that the political landscape is dominated by distinct but overlapping regional (border security) and international (piracy and counter-terrorism) security agendas. The security and stability of the Somali people themselves—the targets of so much of the violence—frequently gets overlooked. A focus on conflict management—which by nature focuses on short-term gains—has resulted in the sidelining of development that would reach a broader spectrum of Somalis. As a result, inequities grow and fuel conflict.

The preference for short-term management over long-term transformation also appears in the overshadowing of development assistance by humanitarian aid, although the latter also has room for improvement, particularly in relation to early warning systems and distribution mechanisms. One impact has been the neglect of the agricultural sector and the environmental resources upon which food security and many livelihoods depend. This has then increased the risk of humanitarian emergencies, with the most recent example being the unprecedented famine that Somalia faced during the second half of 2011.

Understanding Somalia's nexus between conflict and development is far from straightforward, given the complex interplay of the causes of conflict. But this 2012 *Human Development Report* for Somalia argues that conflict, poverty and underdevelopment do sustain and reinforce each other. Future interventions need to be informed by a better understanding of the political economy and the interactions of social and clan dynamics. This is important to improve the status of human development.

Slow pace of human development

Human development equips people with the capabilities and opportunities they need to make choices to improve their lives. Across all dimensions of human development, Somalia has suffered severe consequences from conflict, as reflected in the indices developed by the global *Human Development Report*. The Somali people currently have some of the lowest development and humanitarian indicators in the world, and inequalities across different social groups, a major driver of conflict, have been widening. The famine in 2011 signifies an increasingly dismal future, if approaches to both conflict and development do not significantly change.

Somalia's Human Development Index (HDI) value is strikingly low at 0.285 (Annex 2). If internationally comparable data were available, Somalia would probably rank among the lowest in the world, at 165 out of the 170 countries in the 2010 global Human Development Report. Further, if one accounts for the level of inequality in the distribution of income, education and health—the three components of the HDI—then Somalia's HDI is even worse, with the average loss at 42 percent, as measured by the Inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI).

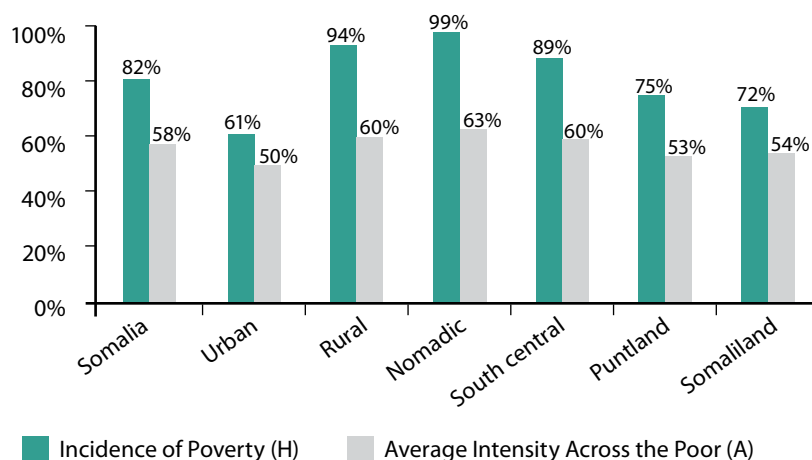
Gender inequality is alarmingly high at 0.776 out of a value of 1 (complete inequality), with Somalia at the fourth lowest position globally on the Gender Inequality Index (GII) if internationally comparable data were available. Women suffer severe exclusion and inequality in all dimensions of the index—health, employment and labour market participation. Somali girls are given away in marriage very young, and violence against girls and women is widespread. Traditional laws, used in lieu of a state judiciary, are highly discriminatory against women. Female genital mutilation (FGM) afflicts an estimated 98 percent of Somali women. Despite national gender equality policies and provisions, for example, gender-based violence and discrimination against Somali women continue to brutally suppress human rights and often go unpunished. Traditional Somali society is conditioned not to openly discuss issues such as domestic violence and rape, which further hampers women's access to justice. Many courageous efforts of Somali women to rise above patriarchy have been isolated and short lived, and they have yet to achieve the critical mass in decision-making required to effect wider change. Young women end up greatly disadvantaged in all spheres of life, a reality that hinders their rights and development, and perpetuates intergenerational cycles of gender inequality and the feminization of poverty.

In terms of measuring deprivations related to poverty, Somalia's Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) of 0.47 out of 1 would place it at 94 out of 104 countries in 2010 if comparisons were made to the ranking in the global HDR. An estimated 82 percent of Somalis are considered poor across multiple dimensions (Figure 1). The divide between urban and rural populations is significant—61 percent and 94 percent, respectively. In south central Somalia, 89 percent of people are poor across several dimensions, compared to 75 percent in Puntland and 72 percent in Somaliland.

A large and excluded generation

The youth population in Somalia will not experience a peak in the foreseeable future due to high fertility rates, estimated at 6.2 births per woman between 2010 and 2015. Over 70 percent of Somalis are under the age of 30; most face blocked transitions to adulthood due to multiple social, economic and political exclusions. These are related to clan and cultural affiliations, gender, age, illiteracy and poverty, among other factors. They have been reinforced

Figure 1: Incidence of Poverty & Average Intensity of Deprivation by Region

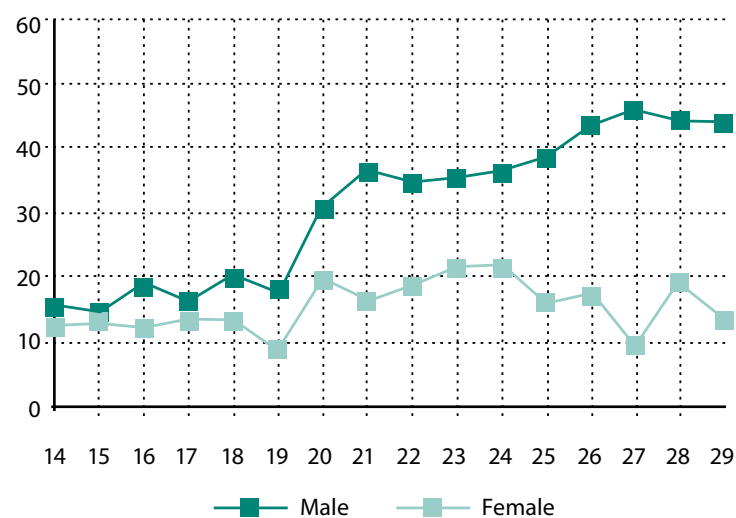


by dominant social attitudes and prejudicial cultural practices, and perpetuated by violence. Exclusion limits capabilities and opportunities, and constricts the contributions of youth to peacebuilding and development. It also dampens the natural energy and enthusiasm of youth, and systematically hinders their potential for positive advancement.

According to a survey conducted to prepare this 2012 Somalia Human Development Report, overall unemployment among people aged 15 to 64 is estimated at 54 percent in Somalia, up from 47 percent in 2002. The unemployment rate for youth aged 14 to 29 is 67 percent—one of the highest rates in the world. Females experienced higher unemployment at 74 percent than males at 61 percent. The majority of unpaid family workers were young women who were mostly forced to take traditional occupations due to entrenched traditional gender roles. A higher labour force participation rate for youth, estimated at 66 percent, further reflects lost opportunities for many who might otherwise attend school and acquire skills and education that could raise their future productivity and potential earnings.

The survey unveiled how Somali youth aged 14 to 29 face challenges deterring their transition from school to the labour market. About 21 percent of youth respondents were neither working nor in school. The proportion of youth neither working nor in school increased with age, although 40 percent of those surveyed who were in this category were actively seeking work. This jobless or discouraged group is the most disadvantaged and most vulnerable to risky and criminal behaviours. The proportion of youth who were neither working nor in school was more pronounced among young women at 27 percent than young men at 15 percent (Figure 2). When school-age children and youth are taken together, a large proportion of the population is idle, neither working nor in school. Strategies for youth in this group need to promote labour market integration before they become involved in criminal activity or other high-risk behaviours.

Figure 2: Youth Not Working and Not in School by Gender



For the most part, the potential gains from a different path—one of youth empowerment and ‘inclusion’—have been overlooked. The potential of youth should be harnessed for positive transformation in Somalia, as otherwise this large generation has the potential to threaten peace, stability and sustainable development. Already, youth are major actors in the conflict, constituting the bulk of the participants in militias and criminal gangs, including Al-Shabaab. Lost opportunities, unclear identity and a growing sense of marginalization among youth in an environment of state collapse, violent conflict and economic decline provide fertile ground for youth radicalization. The same reasons that have pushed young Somalis to join Al-Shabaab have also drawn them to join street gangs. Building on the opportunities offered by youth—and reducing the threats that stem from them—calls for bold and rapid action, starting with an empowerment agenda that brings youth to the centre of peacebuilding and development.

The recent uprisings in the Arab world have demonstrated just how potent youth can be in driving political transformation, especially when fueled by frustrations over a lack of livelihoods or voice in decisions affecting them. In Somalia, poor quality education and the lack of jobs are major sources of tension for thousands of youth. Those aspiring to leadership or political positions are further confronted by discrimination based on age, including legal barriers. Frustrated by the lack of alternative livelihood opportunities, some pursue constructive coping strategies such as migration while others end up in piracy and terrorism. If this reality continues to be neglected, the fallout will be disastrous both for Somalia and, through the continued mushrooming of terrorist groups, the world.

The youth survey conducted as part of preparing this report was used to gauge levels of youth frustration. The Youth Frustration Index was calculated as a measure of youth disempowerment. Respondents were asked to rate their opinion on reasons for frustrations on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with mean scores for the three regions presented in Figure 3. The overall frustration index score in Somalia worked out at 3.96 out of 5, with the highest frustration being observed in south central Somalia at 4.3, compared to the northern zones at 3.7. Across the regions, south central Somalia scored the highest in all predisposing factors for youth restiveness. Youth ranked feelings of humiliation lowest and the lack of employment opportunities highest. A similar ranking was discernible in both Somaliland and Puntland.



It is not surprising that the lack of employment opportunities ranks at the top of youth frustrations—given the 67 percent youth unemployment rate. A majority of youth are willing to leave the country in search of alternative livelihood opportunities. Imbalances between available education and training, and the skills actually required for jobs persist against a backdrop of the multiple shocks that have devastated the Somali economy, including conflict and environmental degradation.

Success in reversing the high levels of youth unemployment, along with underemployment and poverty, will depend on stimulating a diversified and growing economy through policies and programmes that address both demand and supply side considerations. Shifting perceptions and attitudes towards employment must form an integral part of the response, including the perspective that view youth as second-class citizens who must gain in years long before they can grow in responsibility. The recognition that youth unemployment cannot be tackled by single actors working alone should be backed by coordinated responses that are well integrated into strategies confronting the wider crisis of the Somali economy.

On the Youth Frustration Index, relatively low scores on feelings of humiliation and lack of self-esteem reflected that youth still have hopes for the future, despite formidable challenges. This notion was confirmed across all three regions—even in south central Somalia, about 80 percent of respondents in the survey were either very optimistic or fairly optimistic. Both domestic and international peacebuilding and development efforts could do much more to galvanize these high aspirations for change—for youth, and Somalis at large.

Holistic policies and programmes—in practice

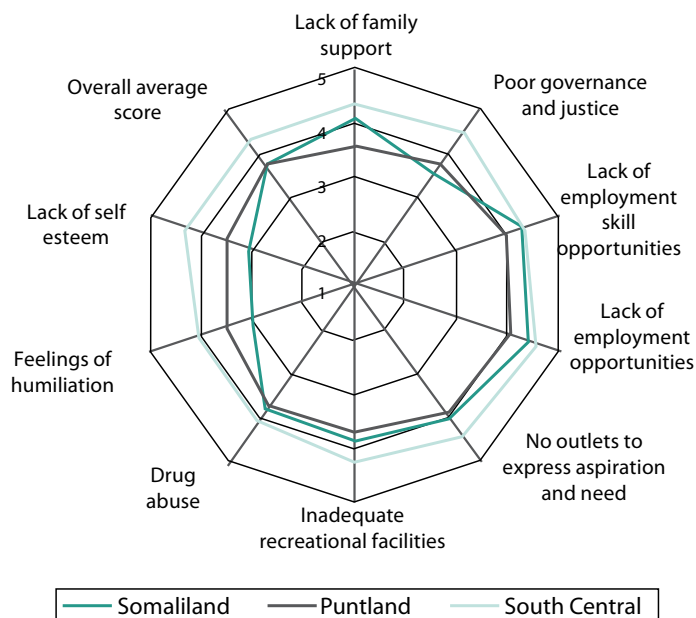
Unleashing the full potential of Somali youth in development and peacebuilding requires holistic policies and programmes geared towards poverty reduction, economic growth, and social and political inclusion. While there has been a growing emphasis on ‘holistic’ and ‘integrated’ approaches to youth, a significant gap exists between rhetoric and practice. There is not yet a systematic framework for understanding and dealing with the full complexities of youth in relation to violent conflict.

International organizations support a variety of youth programmes in Somalia, but they remain thinly scattered and poorly coordinated. There are very few innovative and proven youth-focused projects with potential for wider replication and upscaling. Rights-based programmes dominate, focused on protection, basic education, psycho-social work and advocacy. These are followed by socio-political interventions, such as peace education and support for youth organizations, and economic initiatives, including for vocational training and short-term job creation. Existing job creation programmes are mostly supply-driven, offering training and skills development, with less attention paid to tackling the demand side, such as through public works programmes and sustainable microfinance, self-employment or entrepreneurship schemes. There is little evidence of which strategies work best, information that is critical for wider replication and upscaling, and for choosing the most effective entry points.

Recent encouraging signs include the newly ratified national youth policies in Somaliland and Puntland, and the TFG’s efforts to develop a national youth policy. These offer more comprehensive frameworks. But their impact will very much depend on how well they are anchored in national development strategies and sectoral policies for coordinated action, the resources allocated, and the extent to which youth are engaged in future planning, implementation and monitoring.

To help inform these and other emerging efforts taken by and for youth, the Somalia Human Development Report 2012 presents a holistic policy and programme framework centred on youth as positive agents of change. It harmonizes the three common strategies—rights-based, economic and socio-political—around common goals. These include empowering youth to develop their full potential, to freely express themselves and have their views respected, and to live free of poverty, discrimination and violence.

Figure 3: Youth Frustration and Underlying Causes



Empowerment implies recognizing that youth have diverse needs, interests and unexplored potentials, even those young people at risk of becoming engaged in conflict. Various strategic partners—adults, the private sector, civil society and government—need to come together to collectively offer youth, in a well-integrated manner, the full range and depth of services needed to expand their social, economic and political capabilities and opportunities, at the individual and community levels.

The report presents guiding principles and strategic directions for designing holistic youth programming, focusing on core dimensions of empowerment: the promotion of employability by building assets and capabilities; and sustainable job creation through employment-led growth strategies and the promotion of youth entrepreneurship. Cross-cutting interventions, such as employment and recruitment services, organizational capacity building, youth representation and voice, and environmental sustainability and equity, should be incorporated into youth programming as they facilitate empowerment. These arenas offer a wide range of possible activities and interventions and key elements that constitute a best practice in youth development and empowerment. They are not intended to be a panacea for all the challenges and problems of youth development, but can provide entry points for transformational strategies that shift away from the current, mostly ad hoc, welfare approaches.

Creating and supporting youth organizations, social mobilization and organizational capacity building should be basic building blocks of such programmes. Providing group-based activities, including through sports, community services, education, skills and local entrepreneurship-led employment, could cultivate positive identities, group empowerment, teamwork and leadership skills. Community-led development is one particularly valuable strategy that empowers communities through direct control over investment decisions, and project planning and implementation; it could offer a broad-based space for fostering many innovative youth-led development and peacebuilding programmes.

Given the close links between peace and development, a holistic framework for youth demands concerted collaboration between actors working in development and peacebuilding. Development work needs to proactively incorporate peacebuilding, while the latter needs to integrate measures, including economic ones, to achieve sustainable development and durable peace. Both should strive for empowerment, and through that for transformation.

A reform agenda for dynamic transformation

Towards making the power and potential of youth central to development and peacebuilding, the *Somalia Human Development Report 2012* presents a nine-point agenda for dynamic transformation. Based on the need for moving from isolated to holistic programming, and from conflict management to conflict transformation, it draws on the lessons learned from the slow progress in Somalia over the past 20 years. It is also in the spirit of international and regional youth response strategies, particularly the World Youth Program of Action, the African Youth Decade 2009-2018 Plan of Action and the United Nations Development Group's (UNDG) strategic framework and priority programme areas for joint action that has been developed in response to the key development challenges underlying the political movements in the Arab World.

Underpinning the implementation of this reform agenda is the guiding principle that youth empowerment is a shared responsibility, which can be accelerated meaningfully if all key stakeholders, including government, UN institutions, civil society and non-governmental organizations, the private sector and the diaspora, and youth organizations partner with each other and synergize their efforts to empower young people, so they can align their programmes with the national youth policy framework and plan of action, and mainstream youth perspectives into their programmes and interventions.

The agenda calls for:

Putting empowerment at the centre of the national development agenda: This requires removing policy and institutional barriers that have perpetuated the multiple exclusions and marginalization of youth, and creating and supporting conditions under which young people gain ability, authority, agency and opportunities to make choices for themselves and other people. A coherent



Youth empowerment is a shared responsibility: Government, civil society, the private sector, the diaspora and the international community all have a role to play.
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national youth policy framework needs to be well integrated in the national development strategy and translated into action. All international aid agencies should agree on a joint youth programme of action geared towards a common youth agenda as a vehicle for transformation.

Strengthening democratic governance: This is essential to guaranteeing political rights, protecting economic freedoms, making institutions accountable and fostering an enabling environment where peace and development can flourish. A number of reforms are necessary, starting with a review of the clan-based so-called power-sharing 4.5 formula (Chapter 2, Box 2.4), which should be made more democratic as part of an inclusive state-building and reconciliation process. To ensure the voice and representation of youth in political life, constitutional amendments and reform measures could remove existing age limits for youth to contest elections, at all levels of government.

The decentralization of power and resources at the regional and district levels, and the development of capacities to provide well-managed, inclusive public services and administration would help provide an environment in which individuals feel

protected, civil society and community-based organizations are able to flourish, and state institutions can be held more closely accountable. Upholding respect for human rights and the rule of law may require amending legislation, strengthening judicial institutions, promoting human rights training, and establishing credible, independent and impartial national human rights institutions reinforced by local non-governmental human rights organizations.

Enhancing youth voice and representation: Youth empowerment is not possible without guaranteeing their rights to participate in government decision-making at all levels. Any conventional 'tokenism' should be avoided, and youth should be accepted as partners in decision-making so that they can express their views and make specific contributions to youth-related issues and beyond. Since appropriate institutional mechanisms can ensure youth representation, these should be clearly articulated in the national youth policy framework.



Vocational training for youth can be designed to respond to current market skills needs.
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Strong and interconnected youth organizations at the grass-roots are essential to involving a broad spectrum of youth. At the national level, participation in decision-making bodies could come through the creation of a permanent national youth council, and by ensuring the adequate presence of youth representatives in national youth policy coordination and monitoring body comprising government and other stakeholders. Strong links across all levels of governance, from the local to the national, should be promoted, and extended to the international level where warranted, with an emphasis on regular networking and the exchange of knowledge and experiences.

Enhancing employability of young people: Making skills training and employment services available, affordable, relevant and high in quality should be essential elements of a comprehensive policy to enhance the employability of young people, given the strong links between youth unemployment and frustration. Other policies should provide access to universal, free, quality public primary and secondary education, with a focus on extending access to excluded groups, and with greater attention to quality early childhood development programmes.

Comprehensive vocational training programmes should include life skills, basic education and technical skills to cater to the diverse needs of young people—and respond to current market needs. Critical additional sources of support can come from job search and placement assistance, self-employment services and opportunities for on-the-job experience. A National Youth Empowerment Development Fund could be set up and managed by a national youth council to mobilize additional resources for youth from the government, the donor/aid community, the private sector, the Diaspora and international philanthropic foundations. Part of this funding could be channelled directly to community-based organizations as seed capital or to a revolving fund for microfinancing schemes for innovative youth enterprises.

Promoting employment-led inclusive growth: Widespread youth unemployment cannot be tackled in isolation from the wider crisis confronting the Somali economy. Sustainable employment creation and youth employment promotion should be essential aspects of any overarching economic growth strategy addressing the dual challenges of providing decent work

and strengthening capacities for public and private sector development. Economic policies should be centred on promoting empowerment to attain inclusive pro-poor growth, and avoid growth that is jobless, voiceless and/or futureless. They should focus on unleashing potential in sectors most likely to produce employment and reduce poverty, especially those suited to the skills, interests and experiences of young people.

Appropriate national legislation based on international labour standards and good governance of the labour market should support growth and uphold rights and the quality of employment. Active labour market policies and programmes should target youth, drawing from careful analysis of demand and supply in local employment. Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, need to establish labour market information and monitoring mechanisms to ensure a regular flow of information on employment for young people. Given the limited capacity of the formal labour market to meet the growing demand for youth employment, a critical alternative is self-employment, but at the same time, demand-driven training may help youth eventually access formal employment.

Localizing MDG-based development and peacebuilding: The limits of top-down approaches to consolidating peace and economic recovery in Somalia point to a new bottom-up agenda that localizes peace and development by engaging youth as active partner and positive agent of change. This means mainstreaming peace within the national development strategy, guided by the localization of the MDGs that is youth-centered. Because of its relevance for youth livelihood and empowerment, an integrated community-based approach to development and peacebuilding can yield significant dividends by empowering local communities, leading to increased civil society participation. At the same time, community involvement cannot solve structural issues without the devolution of power and resources.

In peacebuilding, conventional top-down conflict management needs to yield to a new, dynamic vision of peace that is locally empowered, with youth-led community organizations in the driver's seat. It calls for bringing together various strategic partners, including the government, private sector and civil society, to collectively offer all youth a full and well-integrated array of products and services they need to expand their social, economic and political capabilities and opportunities.

'Engendering' development and peacebuilding:

Development and peacebuilding, if not engendered, are endangered. Women, especially young women, need to be at the centre of the national policy agenda, with gender equality measures integrated across all dimensions of all initiatives. Given the prevalence of gender-based violence and discrimination in Somali society, engendering development and peacebuilding will call for confronting existing barriers through policy and planning. This is both a technical and a political process, requiring substantial shifts in organizational cultures and ways of thinking, as well as in the goals, structures and resource allocations of international agencies, governments and NGOs.

Where appropriate, gender programmes should be targeted separately to men and women before a more inclusive approach is devised. While some gender-neutral programmes already attract more girls than boys, even well-intended policies can be gender blind. The evidence of existing women organizations marginalizing young females is a case in point. Gender-targeted programmes with their explicit focus on young women are thus critical to dealing with the different transition to adulthood that girls face. Enhancing youth capabilities should be carried out in a manner that is empowering for young women, focusing on their practical survival needs (such as interventions to reduce domestic workloads) as an entry point to addressing their productive livelihood and strategic (empowerment) needs. All interventions should aim for gender transformation through strategic actions that end unequal power relations between men and women. Empowerment through bottom-up mobilization, in particular, can lead to a natural emancipation that can be sustained.

Ensuring environmentally sustainable human development: Successive humanitarian responses in Somalia have not addressed the environmental costs, even though these are now emerging as a significant source of conflict escalation. Climate change is making the environment and the human beings who live in it more vulnerable, threatening livelihoods and ecological security.



All interventions should aim for gender transformation through strategic actions that end unequal power relations between men and women.
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Moving forward, the country must have a long-term plan of action for natural resource management as an integral component of the national development strategy. Because youth often have a stronger awareness of environmental issues and a greater stake in long-term sustainability, they could have a lead role, including in driving community-led movements for greening human development.

Any framework plan should include the development of a decentralized system of sustainable energy, since a looming energy crisis is becoming a barrier to breaking the cycle of poverty and conflict. This could be community-based, and oriented around both reducing greenhouse gas emissions and providing adaptive responses to climate change. Somalia also needs to urgently design and implement a National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA) that gives a central role to community-based adaptation programmes in taking measures such as harvesting rainwater and managing forests and natural resources. Community-based property rights or lease-hold systems for rangeland management would help address land rights and tenure conflicts, and instill greater motivation for sustainably managing land.

Strengthening the knowledge base: A growing body of research and practice on peacebuilding and development has informed policy makers and development practitioners around the world. Customizing this to Somalia, including informing policy debates, require a rich agenda of research, and improvements in national data and evidence-based analysis.

Towards a systematic and comprehensive study of youth and the dynamics of the conflict-development nexus, an in-depth national mapping and analysis of at-risk youth is required. Other priorities should be comprehensive national living standards measurement and labour force surveys to better understand the varied dimensions of youth empowerment, equity and sustainability. Regionally disaggregated data could increase understanding of inequalities that drive conflict and poverty. Defining an accepted measure of multiple exclusions, and delineating the interactions between inclusion and exclusion are important, as is a measure of empowerment that factors in social, economic and political exclusions, and captures their impacts on development and conflict.

Empowerment at the core

As a cornerstone of human development, empowerment is at the core of the agenda outlined here. It has revolutionary potential in bringing together both the top-down removal of exclusionary policy and institutional barriers, and bottom-up community-led initiatives that empower people socially, politically and economically. In the process, democracy deepens and the causes of conflict—including inequities in society—diminish. Each individual can find new opportunities to develop and use capabilities to lead the lives they choose, and contribute to a more prosperous, peaceful future.



Improved access to education is key to young women's empowerment in Somalia.
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